

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM**

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I'd like to thank-you for the opportunity to speak to you today regarding the National Guard's preparedness for the upcoming hurricane season. As always, the men and women of *your* National Guard stand ready to provide assistance to civilian authorities—in the form of *personnel and equipment*—at the request of the Governors or the President, through a rapid, integrated response across the nation. Even as I stand before you today, *your* National Guard has over 54,000 troops serving bravely in the overseas warfight in Iraq and Afghanistan. Additionally, in a historic announcement made just days ago by the President, the National Guard—some 6,000 troops—will be called to support our border with Mexico for up to two years. This call-up of forces doesn't take into consideration the thousands of Army and Air National Guard forces that are currently serving on the nation's borders supporting the counterterrorism and counterdrug mission. This recent announcement is confirmation that the National Guard's geographical distribution, community integration, and other traditional strengths make it an effective and cost efficient force for many Homeland Defense (HLD) and civil support requirements at both the State and Federal levels.

I share this with you so you might find comfort in knowing that, through real-world training, *your* National Guard is constantly preparing for the next mission whether the next enemy comes in the form of a terrorist or takes shape as a natural disaster. I'm positive no one wants to see the likes of Hurricane Katrina again; however, we are realistic and no preparedness is the best course of action. So, we continue to train for like, or even larger, disasters in order to stay ready, reliable and relevant.

The National Guard is a full spectrum force which balances expeditionary warfight support with Homeland Defense. Training and preparation for the overseas warfighting mission provides National Guard forces with the vast majority of the preparation required for Homeland Defense. It should be noted that the Homeland Defense requirements do not focus solely on material solutions; they also identify needed cultural changes—specifically regarding coordination and unity of effort across multiple agencies and intergovernmental seams. We're seeing great strides in this area. The emphasis of our Homeland Defense mission is on prevention, pre-event deterrence, and responding within the first 96 hours after a major incident.

In preparing for these missions, the National Guard continually examines the emerging threats facing our nation as well as lessons learned from past performance—an in this particular case for which you've invited me here today, the lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina and Rita. So, with that said, the National Guard leadership has identified the capability gaps that as a military force must be overcome in order to be our most effective. While we have overcome many of them, we are constantly working to fill all gaps in order to see continued success in future missions. Failure is not an option, especially when American lives hang in the balance.

I want to be very specific about what your National Guard has done to prepare for the next Katrina; however, in order for you to understand where we are going I think it equally important that you understand where we've been. With that said, I'd like to address the core capabilities inherent within the National Guard that we continue to refine through various initiatives to address the identified gaps I've briefly touched on. My hope is that this will give you a baseline of what the National Guard brings to the fight.

Governors count on the National Guard to be the first military responder and call on Guard assets at their disposal within the first hours of an event; therefore resourcing is critical. The National Guard must be able to support the Governors' requirements on an immediate basis, and respond with the right capabilities, to the right location, at the right time. The States have indicated to the National Guard Bureau that there are certain capabilities they feel they need to meet emergencies. As a result, we have identified the following ten essential capabilities each State, Territory and District of Columbia must maintain at all times: (1) Joint Force Headquarters (2) Engineering (3) Civil Support Teams (4) Security (5) Medical (6) Transportation (7) Maintenance (8) Logistics (9) Aviation and, (10) Communications. In many cases, we leverage the EMAC—Emergency Management Agreement Compact—system to ensure these ten essentials are available to every state and territory. EMAC has proven successful in, and I'll discuss this agreement in more detail.

We are seeking to further leverage the capacity currently existing in these 10 essential capabilities to address identified gaps through the development of the following initiatives and concepts.

- (1) **Joint Force Headquarters—State (JFHQ-State).** JFHQ-State is a joint command and control entity in each State and territory. It is integrated into national consequence management and contingency planning structures. JFHQs provide situational updates (common operating picture) information to national level headquarters before and during any contingency operation and Joint Reception, Staging, and Onward Movements, and Integration (JRSOI) for all inbound military forces. In very simplistic terms, JRSOI is simply a selection of predetermined sites (distribution points, airports etc) and routes for moving supplies and personnel into affected areas. Federal law provides a mechanism whereby a National Guard officer can command federal troops. Such a commander at the head of a Joint Task Force—State (JTF-State), which is created in times of emergency by the Joint Force Headquarters, can assume tactical control of all military units –State National Guard, other National Guard forces, Active Component and Reserves. The JTF-State commander can be a dual-hatted commander of both Title 32 (Federally funded, yet state controlled) and Title 10 (Federally funded and controlled) forces as demonstrated in the 2004 G8 Summit as well as the Democratic and Republican National Conventions.
- (2) **Joint Force Headquarters Joint Operations Centers (JFHQ JOC).** The JOC is a network composed of the National Guard Bureau JOC, located in Arlington, Virginia and a separate JOC in each of the 54 States and Territories. The JFHQ JOC serves as the primary entity for coordinating, facilitating, and synchronizing efforts in support of their states, information requirements of the National Guard Bureau and customers at the Federal level during natural disasters, National Special Security Events (NSSE), exercises and domestic activities. Each JFHQ JOC has redundant connectivity: DoD architecture of NIPR and SPIR; a High Frequency (HF) network with classified and unclassified voice and data information; and commercial systems. In a nutshell, the JOC concept allows for a continual and accurate flow of information from each state and territory into the

National Guard Bureau. In turn, this information is consolidated and shared with Northern Command and other federal agencies.

- (3) **National Guard Chemical, Biological, Radiological/Nuclear, and high-yield Explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP).** The National Guard developed and fielded 12 CERFP teams to provide a regional capability to respond to incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological or high explosive threats. Each team is designed to rapidly (less than 96 hours) provide the capability to locate and extract victims from a CBRNE incident site and perform mass patient/casualty decontamination and medical triage and stabilization. The CERFP augments the capabilities of the National Guard's Civil Support Teams (CST). The incremental training and equipment for this capability is specialized, compatible with the first responders, and interoperable with the incident command system. Congress provided direction and, for FY'06, funding to establish an additional 5 teams bringing the total to 17.
- (4) **Critical Infrastructure Program- Mission Assurance Assessments (CIP-MAA).** National Guard CIP-MAA teams execute the pre-planning needed to educate the civilian agencies on basic force protection and emergency response. Additionally, these teams are building relationships with first responders, owners of critical infrastructure and National Guard planners in the States and Territories. CIP-MAA teams deploy traditional National Guard forces in a timely fashion to assist in protection of the Nation's critical infrastructure, including vital elements of the Defense Industrial Base. Currently, six "pilot" teams staffed by 14 specially trained National Guard personnel conduct vulnerability assessments.
- (5) **National Guard Reaction Force (NGRF).** Being based in so many communities, the National Guard has proven time and again that it can muster forces and be on the scene of an incident within hours. Each of the 54 States and Territories is currently training a battalion size reaction force that can respond anywhere in the state with an initial 75 to 125 person element within a minimum of four to eight hours. So, generally, we can get a company of troops on the ground within hours and a battalion in place overnight. These reaction forces provided crucial support to law enforcement in the response to Hurricane Katrina. The NGRF is task-organized from existing units and can provide Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP), site security, and security and support during CBRNE contingency operations.

- (6) **Joint CONUS Communications Support Environment (JCCSE).** The National Guard has successfully established a JCCSE nationwide. This communication environment is a joint National Guard Bureau and Northern Command strategy for leveraging current National Guard communication capabilities to provide support to the major military commands, Department of Defense as well as non-DoD partners at State/Territory-level and to any incident site. Each JFHQ established Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) linkages. The HSIN is an unsecured collection of Department of Homeland Security systems designed to facilitate information sharing and collaboration. Additionally, each Joint Force Joint Operation Center (JF JOC) has secure/non-secure real-time operational network linkages in addition to secure video teleconference capabilities. This is critical to providing real time operational connectivity as well as a common operating picture to local, state and federal agencies.
- (7) **Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Teams (WMD-CSTs).** Include 22 Army and Air National Guard- Active Guard Reserve (AGR) personnel organized, trained and equipped to enter contaminated areas and identify contaminants within a short period of time. They have extensive reach-back communications capability to facilitate off-site evaluation and support from various laboratories. They are equipped with mobile laboratories capable of providing identification of chemical or biological materials. To date, the National Guard has fielded 36 CSTs and will have 55 teams by FY07.
- (8) **Aviation Security and Support (S&S) Battalions.** As part of the Army's overall aviation transformation, the Army National Guard has been able to convert and grow some valuable dual-purpose aviation structure that will be readily available and responsive to Homeland Security/Defense needs, in addition to their normal Army operational mission. The ARNG officially activated six of these 24-aircraft S&S Battalions on 1 October 2005 and placed them in readily responsive locations across 44 states.

We are, once again, on point to test many of these preparedness measures—some which were put in place since last year—as we are fast approaching another hurricane season. In this post-Katrina era we find that the best preparation for the next potential disaster is history. With that said, I want to stress for the record that I continue to be particularly proud of the timeliness and magnitude of the National Guard's efforts in

advance of Hurricane Katrina and our response in its immediate aftermath. National Guard forces were in the water and on the streets of New Orleans rescuing people within four hours of Katrina's passing. Over 50,000 National Guard personnel hailing from every state and territory responded to calls for support of the affected region. The effort was tremendous, but we realize we can always improve. I always tell my leadership and my troops that in order to have a *great* team we have to practice to the point of failure to ensure our future success. Once you identify the broken parts, you can then focus on a plan to strengthen the weak link. With that said, the real-world test on the magnitude of Katrina, definitely helped us find the breaking points on which we've focused much attention.

In our after-action reviews of our response to Katrina, we talked with our troops on the ground in the hurricane affected areas as well as our commanders, and we participated and learned from the Senate and House hearings to gain a good understanding of our performance shortfalls. We've taken these "lessons learned" and incorporated them into our training and exercise play to improve upon our emergency response effectiveness over the past several months. I'd like to take a moment to walk you through a couple of our most recent activities focused specifically on hurricane preparedness and emergency response. I believe they serve as a very good warm-up to the beginning of the hurricane season.

Our most recent preparedness measure was our participation in Ardent Sentry '06. The two-week U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) exercise was designed to test military support to federal, provincial, state and local authorities while continuing to support the Defense Department's homeland security mission. This emergency response exercise included more than 5,000 U.S. and Canadian service members working with authorities in five state and two Canadian provinces to test response capabilities. The scenario includes crises ranging from a major hurricane to a terrorist attack to a pandemic flu outbreak. Again, the goal is to find the points of failure. Among the many objectives of the exercise—improved communications, interagency coordination, and emergency response training—I am particularly pleased with the working relationship that has developed between the National Guard Bureau and Northern Command. It may seem

like a simple objective, but this relationship between the two is critical to future success of any national response.

Several hurricane response workshops and conferences have been conducted throughout the year with the most recent being in Hilton Head, South Carolina at the end of April. Attendees included National Guard planners from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, Virgin Islands, Northern Command and other federal agencies. I don't have to tell you that there are huge benefits to pulling these key regional players together in one place. Each participant provided updates on their specific hurricane preparedness and assets that are available to them. So, we're all learning from one another and, I'll stress that if this opportunity allows just one state to improve on its' existing hurricane plan by gaining an idea from another state I'd consider that a success. Simple changes can save many lives. When you net it all down, the sharing of information—whether it be too identify deficiencies and shortcomings or helping others to understand capabilities available to them in time of disaster—prior to an actual event is important to your survival during the actual event.

While we've conducted several and have more to follow, I've only highlighted a couple of the conferences and exercises specifically designed to improve our emergency response to a hurricane. We conduct these exercises for obvious reasons; however, it's worth repeating that a great team must practice to the point of failure to ensure future success.

Our review of Katrina helped to identified four major issues that needed to be addressed before this hurricane season—resourcing, interoperability, command and control of all military forces and training. I'd now like to address what we *have* done and what we *are* doing to address each of these issues in order to ensure our preparedness.

RESOURCING

Even prior to 9/11, the National Guard did not have all of the equipment it is required to have to be fully mission capable. The pace of combat has placed even further challenges on us. In order to ensure that deploying units are fully equipped and ready to support operations anywhere in the world, we have transferred over 101,000 items of

equipment in support of these missions. This situation has presented the National Guard with challenges in keeping our inventories here at home fully supplied with critical items such as trucks, radios, and heavy engineering equipment. With the help of Congress and the President, we have made an excellent start in filling these equipment gaps, and the President's budget will allow the National Guard to continue on the road to recovery. Over the FY06-FY-11 timeframe, the Administration plans to invest \$19.2 billion and \$4.4 billion in the Army and Air National Guard, respectively, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to providing the resources necessary to protect our homeland.

We are also addressing this through force structure rebalancing and as mentioned earlier the use of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) as an essential force multiplier. This agreement among the States enhances a Governor's response capabilities by providing access to regional forces and equipment. Without question, EMAC enabled the National Guard to overcome many of the equipment/resource obstacles faced during Hurricane Katrina and Rita. The National Guard Bureau Joint Operations Center (NGB JOC) served as the coordination point for the various EMAC requests before sending the requests out to the states and territories. We provided needed advice and assistance to Governors in identifying, selecting, requesting and deploying Guard forces needed in the affected states. We were able to test this process thoroughly during the recently conducted Ardent Sentry '06 exercise that I just discussed.

Maintaining essential capabilities across the National Guard, amid on-going overseas operations, Active Component (AC)/Reserve Component (RC) rebalance, modularity conversions, and national strategy adjustments is an evolving task. Nevertheless, the National Guard Bureau attempts to synchronize all of these activities to ensure at least 50 percent of a given state's National Guard is always available for state missions, and HLD operations.

INTEROPERABILITY

The White House report, *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina Lessons Learned* spoke to the need for interoperability. It said, "lack of interoperable communications was apparent at the tactical level, resulting from the fact that emergency responders,

National Guard, and active duty military use different equipment.” Our specialized C4 packages, though limited in number, were able to bridge the frequency gap between military and civilian personnel in many locations. An in-depth look at interoperability is on-going and there is a “sense of urgency” inside the Army and the Defense Department about meeting the National Guard’s equipment needs.

On a positive note, Katrina supplemental funding was leveraged to enhance the National Guard’s Joint CONUS Communications Support Environment (JCCSE), which I discussed earlier is a joint National Guard Bureau and Northern Command strategy. As a result, twenty three states—located primarily in the hurricane region—will have access to the new Joint Incident Site Communications Capability (JISCC) by hurricane season. This communication system will provide a bridge for civilian and intergovernmental agencies that exist at the state and local level, so they can interface in a synergistic and coordinated fashion with the DoD assets that may be requested.

COMMAND AND CONTROL

The infusion of the active duty forces into the Hurricane Katrina response effort presented some challenges at the operational level. There were some gaps in communication, coordination and integration into ongoing National Guard and Emergency Response operations already underway by the affected states. The situation was occasionally exacerbated by incompatible communication systems, lack of familiarity with the local area, and lack of involvement in the pre-Hurricane planning.

The efficacy of the creation of the Joint Forces Headquarters-State (JFHQ-State)—which I discussed earlier—was proven in the National Guard portion of the response as both of the hardest hit states, Mississippi and Louisiana were able to integrate forces from 53 other states and territories and the District of Columbia. Furthermore, the Joint Forces Headquarters-State could have provided reception, staging, and onward integration for the federal forces deployed by NORTHCOM to support the civil authorities in the affected states.

In addition to the benefits of JFHQ-State I’ve already discussed, a Joint Task Force-State (JTF-State) can, with state-federal concurrence, assume tactical control of all

military units ordered to respond to a contingency operation or disaster. This includes all state National Guard, other National Guard forces, Active Component as well as Reserves. The JTF-State commander can be a dual-hatted commander of both Title 32 and Title 10 forces giving unity of command within the military forces. The JTF-State can act as a subordinate Command and Control headquarters for US NORTHCOM if required. The effectiveness of dual-hatted command was proven in 2004 at the G8 Summit, Operation Winter Freeze as well as the Democratic and Republican National Conventions. These were landmark achievements. For the first time in our nation's history, the military attained unity of command for all forces operating in support of a major event. In each case, from one Joint Force Headquarters, a single National Guard officer commanded Guard units from multiple states operating under Title 32 authority, as well as Active Component Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps title 10 forces in a joint, intergovernmental, interagency environment.

TRAINING

I'd like to transition into training and the National Guard's determination to take advantage of opportunities to share training and planning expertise with civilian partners, and the importance that these efforts be institutionalized. One of the White House reports that came out after Katrina recommended that each Federal agency have a homeland security professional development program. We are pleased to say that we are already heading in that direction. The National Guard's Joint Interagency Training Center in West Virginia, serves as a model that demonstrates how joint training capacity can be expanded and how the military and civilian communities can train and work together. We are working with the Joint Forces Command to institutionalize this Center within the Departments process for joint education and training. This will allow us to increase the overall effectiveness of the national effort through standardized operational concepts, shared experiences, and enhanced interoperability.

These four areas of concern -- resourcing for personnel and equipment, interoperability, command and control of all military forces, and training -- will require continued attention as each is crucial to ensuring an effective response for Homeland Defense and civil support. Identifying and correcting these concerns will only improve the National Guard's already high state of readiness.

I'll close by saying your National Guard is ready, reliable and relevant. Thank you for your time, and I would be happy to answer any of your questions at his time.